

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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SUBJECT: SUSPENSION OF US-CANADIAN INTERIM FISHING
AGREEMENT

REF: HALIFAX 0275 , OTTAWA 02800

1. REACTION TO NEWS OF SUSPENSION OF US-CANADIAN INTERIM FISHING AGREEMENT BY JOHN MULLALLY, NOVA SCOTIA S DEPUTY FISHERIES MINISTER, WAS LOW KEY AND RESTRAINED. HE SAW 1978 INTERIM AGREEMENT AS PROBABLY FOREDOOMED BECAUSE IT WAS BASICALLY NOTHING MORE THAN A REHASH OF THE 1977 INTERIM AGREEMENT (PLUS AN ADD-ON) WITH ALL OF THAT DOCUMENT S DELIBERATE IMPRECISION AND INHERENT DEFECTS. MOST UNFORTUNATE ASPECT OF TRYING TO MANAGE FISHERY WITH US, HE INDICATED, WAS OUR INABILITY TO REGULATE OUR FISHERMEN EXCEPT SUBSEQUENT TO FORMULATION OF A FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN WHICH COULD BE DRAWN UP ONLY AFTER HOLDING PUBLIC HEARINGS.

2. RECIPROCAL BANNING OF FISHERMEN FROM EACH OTHER S
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FISHERIES ZONES, MULLALLY THOUGHT, WOULD PROBABLY FALL HARDEST ON CANADA IN THE WEST COAST FISHERIES (ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT CERTAIN OF THIS) AND ON THE UNITED STATES IN THE EAST COAST FISHERIES. HARDEST HIT OF THE EAST COAST US FISHERMEN WILL BE THOSE WHO FISH FOR REDFISH AND SWORDFISH ALONG THE ATLANTIC COAST OF NOVA SCOTIA. THE EAST COAST CANADIAN FISHERMEN

MOST AFFECTED WILL BE THOSE WHO FISH FOR HERRING IN THE GULF OF MAINE FOR THE US MARKET.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE EAST COAST FISHERIES, MULLALLY WAS OF OPINION THAT THE RECIPROCAL BANNING WOULD HAVE LITTLE OVERALL ECONOMIC EFFECT BUT HE NEVERTHELESS SEEMED GENUINELY REGRETFUL THAT THE GOC FELT IT NECESSARY TO SUSPEND THE INTERIM AGREEMENT.

4. DR. BILL MURPHY, PRESIDENT OF MERSEY SEAFOODS IN LIVERPOOL, NS, REACTED--LIKE MULLALLY--MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER. HE SUMMARIZED HIS REACTION AS "DISMAYED, BUT RESIGNED" TO THE INEVITABILITY OF THE FAILURE OF THE INTERIM FISHERIES AGREEMENT. HE TERMED THE US REGULATORY MECHANISMS FOR ITS FISHERMEN AS "PONDEROUS AND UNWORKABLE" AND EXPRESSED REGRETS THAT CANADA S BANNING OF US FISHERMEN FROM ITS WATERS WILL FALL HARDEST ON US REDFISH FLEET WITH WHOM CANADIAN FISHING INDUSTRY HAS NO QUARREL.

5. IN CONTRAST TO RESTRAINED AND REGRETFUL ATTITUDE OF THOSE IN GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY, ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA CHOSE TO HIGHLIGHT THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT AND CONFRONTATION. FILM CLIPS AND COMMENTARY ON LOCAL CBC TV NEWS SHOW JUNE 2 WERE NOT BY ANY MEANS BELLIGERENT BUT DID GIVE IMPRESSION OF A
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PLUCKY AND RIGHTEOUS CANADIAN DAVID ABOUT TO ENTER THE LISTS AGAINST A GREEDY US GOLIATH. SIMILARLY, LOCAL PRESS SEEMED TO LAY GREAT EMPHASIS ON POST-DEADLINE SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES WHICH WOULD SEEK TO FIND AMERICAN VESSELS CONTINUING TO FISH IN CANADIAN WATERS, AND DISCUSSED IN SOME DETAIL THE POTENTIAL PENALTIES WHICH COULD BE LEVIED AGAINST SUCH MALEFACTORS. WILL POUCH CLIPPINGS TO EMBASSY OTTAWA AND EUR/CAN.

6. HALIFAX PRESS IS NOTORIOUSLY SLOW IN RESPONDING ON EDITORIAL PAGE TO CURRENT EVENTS. IT WAS NOT SURPRISING THEREFORE, THAT NEITHER MORNING NOR AFTERNOON JUNE 3 PAPERS HAD EDITORIALS ON SUBJECT. IN CONVERSATION WITH ME ON JUNE 2, OWNER OF HALIFAX HERALD LTD (WHICH PUBLISHES BOTH HALIFAX DAILIES) CONDEMNED GOC S ACTION IN SUSPENDING INTERIM FISHERIES AGREEMENT. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT HE WILL ULTIMATELY WRITE A PRO-US EDITORIAL. MY GUESS IS THAT HE WILL ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE THE CANADIAN MEDIA CONSENSUS AND WILL TRIM HIS EDITORIAL SAILS ACCORDINGLY.
MOORE

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